Amendments to the Claims:

Claims 1-8 **(previously cancelled)**

9. **(currently amended)** A support member for a high pressure filtration semipermeable membrane,

said support member comprising a nonwoven fabric,

said nonwoven fabric comprising

a polyester fiber having a double refraction (Δn) of 0.170 or more, a heat shrinkage stress at 200°C of 0.10-0.60 g/d, and a mean single fiber fineness of 1.0-6.5 denier, and

said nonwoven fabric having a mean value of breaking length at an elongation of 5% in a lengthwise direction (MD) and a crosswise direction (CD) of 4.0 km or more ~~and~~, having an air permeability of 0.2-5.0 $cc/cm^2 \cdot s$, and having a pore size (maximum pore diameter) of 42 μm or less,

the support member being used in contact with the semipermeable membrane.

10. **(previously added)** The support member according to claim 9, wherein said nonwoven fabric contains said polyester fiber in an amount of 30-70% by weight.

11. **(previously added)** The support member according to claim 9, wherein said polyester fiber is poly(alkylene arylate) comprised of a diol unit selected from an ethylene glycol unit and a 1,4-butanediol unit and a dicarboxylic acid unit selected from a terephthalic acid unit and a naphthalenedicarboxylic acid unit.

12. **(previously added)** A process for preparing a support member for a semipermeable membrane, which comprises:

(ii) subjecting the monolayered paper web to a heat treatment under pressure to bind the fibers to each other.

13. **(previously added)** The process according to claim 12, which further comprises

(iii) laminating a second monolayered paper web or other fibrous web on the heat-treated monolayered paper web, and then

(iv) subjecting the laminated webs to a heat treatment under pressure to bind the webs together.

14. **(previously added)** The process according to claim 12, wherein the heat weldable binder fiber is a polyester fiber.

15. **(previously added)** A process for preparing a support member for a semipermeable membrane, which comprises:

(i) forming a monolayered paper web comprising a polyester fiber having a double refraction (Δn) of 0.170 or more and a heat shrinkage stress at 200°C of 0.10-0.60 g/d, and a heat weldable binder fiber, in a weight ratio of 70:30-30:70, and

(ii) laminating a second monolayered paper web or other fibrous web on the monolayered paper web, and then

(iii) subjecting the laminated webs to a heat treatment under pressure to bind the webs together.

16. **(previously added)** The process according to claim 15, wherein the heat weldable binder fiber is a polyester fiber.

17. **(previously added)** A semipermeable membrane comprising a semipermeable film formed on a side of the support member according to claim 9.

17. **(previously added)** A semipermeable membrane comprising a semipermeable film formed on a side of the support member according to claim 9.

18. **(currently amended)** A high pressure filtration nonwoven fabric, comprising

a polyester fiber having a double refraction (Δn) of 0.170 or more, a heat shrinkage stress at 200°C of 0.10-0.60 g/d, and a mean single fiber fineness of 1.0-6.5 denier, and

said nonwoven fabric having a mean value of breaking length at an elongation of 5% in a lengthwise direction (MD) and a crosswise direction (CD) of 4.0 km or more ~~and~~, having an air permeability of 0.2-5.0 $cc/cm^2 \cdot s$, and having a pore size (maximum pore diameter) of 42 μm or less,

the nonwoven fabric being used in contact with the semipermeable membrane.